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ANNUAL      REPORT

of the

MEDICAL      OFFICER      OF      HEALTH

FOR THE YEAR      1952





BOROUGH OF BRIDGNORTH

PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS OF THE AUTHORITY

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Medical Officer of Health: James L. Gregory, M.B., F.R.I.P.S.,  
D.P.H., D.T.M. & Hy.

Senior Sanitary Inspector: E.J. Morgans, B.Sc., M.R.S.I.

Additional Sanitary Inspector: R.V. Webb, M.R.S.I.

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BOROUGH OF BRIDGNORTH

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

1952

Bridgnorth.

1st June, 1953.

To the Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors.

Mr. Mayor and Gentlemen,

I have the honour of presenting the Annual Report on the health of the Borough for the year ending on the 31st December, 1952. It is drawn up in accordance with the Ministry of Health's Circular 2/53, dated 22nd January, 1953.

The statistics which relate to the Public Health of the Borough are satisfactory. No serious epidemic of Infectious Disease falls to be recorded and there were no deaths from any of these diseases. Measles was prevalent among the children during the month of December, 115 cases being notified.

An Inquiry was held in July, 1952, by an Inspector from the Ministry of Housing and Local Government into the Council's proposals for constructing a sewage disposal plant for the town. In January, 1953, approval in principle was received from the Ministry to the proposed new scheme, with the exception of the sewerage of Oldbury which has had to be deferred for the present. The Council's Consulting Engineers have been requested to submit detailed plans for submission to the Ministry.

A total of 41 houses were completed by the Council during the year, including 4 flats. Nine houses were built by private enterprise and as it is now easier to obtain a licence for private building it is to be hoped that more private houses will be built. At the end of the year 31 Council houses were in course of erection and 6 private houses. The number of applicants for Council houses at the end of the year was 272, which number is fifty more than at the same date in 1951.

I would like to thank Mr. E.J. Morgans and his Assistants for their help in preparing some Sections of the Report.

I have the honour to be,  
Your obedient Servant,

JAMES L. GREGORY.

Medical Officer of Health.

BOROUGH OF BRIDGNORTH  
VITAL STATISTICS - 1952

<u>Live Births</u> -		Total	M.	F.
Legitimate		112	50	62
Illegitimate		5	2	3
	Totals	117	52	65

BIRTH RATE per 1,000 of population = 20.0

<u>Still Births</u> -	Legitimate	Nil.
	Illegitimate	Nil.

STILL BIRTH RATE = Nil.

<u>Deaths</u> -	101	41	60
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DEATH RATE per 1,000 of population = 13.8

<u>Deaths from Puerperal Causes.</u>	<u>Number of deaths</u>	<u>Rate per 1,000 total births</u>
(a) From Puerperal Sepsis	Nil	-
(b) From other Puerperal Causes	Nil	-
Total	Nil	-

<u>Deaths of Infants under one year.</u>	<u>Number of deaths</u>	<u>Rate per 1,000 live births</u>
(a) Legitimate infants per 1,000 legitimate births.	4	35.7
(b) Illegitimate infants per 1,000 illegitimate births.	Nil	-
(c) All infants per 1,000 total live births.	4	34.2

The rates for England Wales were:-

Birth Rate - 15.3 per 1,000 of population.  
Death Rate - 11.4 per 1,000 of population.

Deaths from Cancer	14
" " Tuberculosis - Pulmonary	3
" " Non-pulmonary	-
" " Measles	-
" " Whooping Cough	-
" " Poliomyelitis	-

## SECTION A.

### SOCIAL CONDITIONS AND VITAL STATISTICS

#### GENERAL STATISTICS

Area (in acres)	2,645
Estimated population - (mid-1952)	6,045
Number of inhabited houses	1,989
Rateable Value of the District	£33,048
Estimated product of ld. Rate	£126

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#### NOTES ON VITAL STATISTICS

##### Births and Birth Rates.

Births registered numbered 117 (Male 52 and Female 65) of which number five were illegitimate. The birth-rate was 20.0 which is higher than that for the country (15.3).

##### Still-births.

No still-births were registered.

##### Deaths and Death-rate.

Deaths numbered 101 (Male 41, Female 60). The corrected death-rate was 13.8. (Eng. & W. - 11.4).

The three chief causes of death were - Dis. of Heart and Circulation (40), Cancer (14) and Vascular lesions of the Nervous System (11). Three deaths were due to Pulmonary Tuberculosis as compared with five in the previous year.

##### Infantile Mortality.

Four infants died before reaching the age of one year. The Infant Mortality Rate was 34.2 per 1,000 live births. In the previous year there were no Infant Deaths but there were four Still Births. Of the four deaths mentioned three took place under the age of 4 weeks. (Ages at death were - 2 days, 3 days, 3 weeks and 11 months).

##### Puerperal Deaths.

No deaths were reported from causes due to child-birth. Last year also there were no such deaths.

##### Natural Increase of Population.

The number of births exceed the number of deaths by 16.



## SECTION B.

### GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES

#### Staff.

The Officers are as follows - Medical Officer of Health (part time), Senior Sanitary Inspector, who is also Surveyor, and an Additional Sanitary Inspector. Their names and qualifications are given at the beginning of the Report. There have been no changes during the year.

#### Laboratory Facilities.

Bacteriological examination of water, milk, ice cream, etc. are carried out at the Public Health Laboratory, Shrewsbury. Chemical examinations of water and of sewage effluents are carried out at the Laboratory, Chester.

#### Ambulance Services.

The Central Ambulance Depot is at Shrewsbury. (Telephone No. 2626). Applications for an ambulance should be made to the Depot. In addition there are two ambulances and one car stationed at Bridgnorth and these are available for short journeys. The Telephone Number is Bridgnorth 2303. No complaints were received during the year of any difficulty in getting an ambulance when required.

#### Nursing in the Home.

These services are controlled by the County Council and particulars of the work done during the year will be found in the Report of the County Medical Officer of Health.

#### Hospital Accommodation.

During the year a change took place with regard to the type of case to be admitted to Innage House. The Hospital Board decided to have all patients who require medical or surgical treatment sent to Shifnal Hospital, and in future Innage House will be used as Part III accommodation under the National Assistance Act. Otherwise there has been no change as regards hospital accommodation for the Borough.

#### School Clinic, Infant Welfare Centre, etc.

The School Clinic is at Northgate and is open as follows:-

Mondays 10 - 11 a.m., other days 9 - 10 a.m.

The Maternity and Child Welfare Centre is held on Mondays from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. An after care Clinic for Orthopaedic cases is also held at Bridgnorth from 11 a.m. till 1 p.m. on alternate Mondays.

The Clinics for Tuberculosis and for Venereal Diseases are held at Shrewsbury and there are also Tuberculosis Dispensaries at Wolverhampton and Kidderminster.

#### Home Help Service.

This has been continued during the year and is controlled by the County Council.

## SECTION C.

### SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

This section deals with water supplies, sewerage and sewage disposal, refuse collection and disposal, pest control and other matters concerned with environmental hygiene. I am indebted to the Surveyor and Inspector for most of the figures in this and the following two sections.

#### WATER SUPPLIES.

The town's main supply, which is from two bore-holes at Rindleford Mill, has proved satisfactory both as regards quantity and purity during the year. The average daily output of the pumps at Rindleford is over 400,000 gallons per day and in addition to the amount used in the town a considerable amount is supplied to consumers outside the Borough.

In addition to the main supply to the town there are still some stand-pipes which supply water from the former Conduit Supply to the town and approximately about 60 houses get a supply from these stand-pipes.

#### Purity of Supplies.

A total of nine samples were taken for bacteriological examination and these were all satisfactory for a domestic supply. The water is chlorinated at Rindleford.

As regards samples from the Conduit Supply a total of eight samples were taken from the 24 Stand Pipes and in two cases the results were not satisfactory. The storage tank supplying these stand-pipes has been treated with chlorine so as to render the supply safe.

Four samples taken from wells at Oldbury proved unsatisfactory and the Surveyor reports that a scheme has been prepared to extend the water main to a point within reasonable distance of the houses supplied. The main laying has now commenced.

As mentioned in last year's Report the water from Rindleford is a hard one and the Council have considered the question of having it softened at source. No decision has as yet been arrived at but there is no doubt that if it were softened it would be much more suitable for a domestic supply than at present.

At the Grove Housing Site a length of 830 yards of 3" water main was laid and will be able to supply 150 houses there.

#### SEWERAGE AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL

In January 1953, the Ministry of Housing and Local Government gave approval in principle to the Council's proposals to intercept sewage from the existing outfalls and to pump it to new treatment works to be constructed on the site proposed near the existing plant. This decision followed the Inquiry which was held in July, 1952. It will enable the Council to proceed with their building programme,



which otherwise might have been delayed, and will also bring to an end the considerable pollution of the River Severn by the town's sewage.

Trial boreholes have been sunk on the sites of the proposed sewage pumping station and of the new disposal works during the year. It is hoped that detailed plans of the scheme will soon be available for submission to the Ministry.

The construction of a new 6" foul sewer in Love Lane which was commenced in 1951 was completed in February 1952, and connected to the existing disposal works in Stanley Lane. New houses being built in Love Lane are being connected to the new sewer.

It is estimated that 1,904 of the houses in the Borough are connected to the sewers, 44 to private disposal works and the remaining 40 houses are not connected to a water carriage system of disposal.

The Ministry do not consider that the sewerage of Oldbury is of such urgency that it should be included in the new scheme at the present time.

#### PREVENTION OF DAMAGE BY PESTS ACT, 1949.

The Rodent Operative who works in the Borough for one month in each quarter of the year has dealt with all premises reported to be infested with rats or mice, including a number of industrial premises where contracts have been made for this service.

Two treatments were carried out on the sewers in the District where three minor infestations were observed. Periodic treatments of the refuse tip and sewage disposal works were also undertaken.

#### REFUSE COLLECTION AND DISPOSAL.

There is a weekly collection as formerly throughout the Borough. A new KARRIER BANTAM refuse vehicle was purchased during the year. Household salvage is collected with the refuse and another vehicle is engaged one day a week in collecting salvage from commercial premises in the town.

#### FACTORY ACT - 1937.

The Inspector reports that there are 61 Factories on the Register of which number 45 have power and 16 have no power.

A total of eleven visits were paid and two written notices served.

In three cases the Factory Inspector referred premises where there was insufficient or unsuitable closet accommodation and in every case this matter was attended to.

## SECTION D.

### H O U S I N G.

Number of inhabited houses		1,989
Number of Council Houses		379
Houses completed in 1952 -	Council 41	
	Private 9	
	Total	50
Total applications for houses		272
Applications for Improvement Grants		Nil
Private licences granted in 1952		21
Houses under construction at 31.12.52.		
	Council 20	
	Private 15	35

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It will be seen that the Council now own 20% of all the houses in the Borough or one house in every five. The number of new Council Houses completed (41) is less than the number completed in 1951 (52). During the year the Sydney Cottage Estate was completed with the erection of four shops and flats and good progress was made on the new site at the Grove, where it is planned to build 200 houses. A total of 20 houses are already completed on this latter site.

#### Housing Acts, 1949 and 1952.

Under the above Acts it is possible to obtain Improvement Grants for houses of the older types. It is necessary however for the work to be an improvement and not merely repairs which are not included in these Grants. The amount which can now be spent and a Grant obtained has been increased to a maximum of £800, on which a Grant of 50% may be given if the work is approved by the Council and the Ministry. The Act of 1952 extended these Grants to 'tied' cottages which were excluded by the previous Act of 1949. It will be seen that no application has been received for Grants either in 1952 or in 1951, so that it would appear that they have failed so far in their purpose of encouraging owners to have their properties improved. It may be that property owners are not all aware of the opportunity offered them to bring their houses into better condition or it may be that even with the financial help offered the cost of building improvements is still too high, especially as rents are controlled. No doubt further legislation will be forthcoming in the future to assist owners of property in this important matter.

#### Housing Repairs.

During the year the amount which can be spent on repairs without a licence was raised from £100 to £200, and now from 1st January, 1953, the maximum which can be spent without licence is £500. So that, as far as licences are concerned, there is no hindrance to repairs being carried out. The chief obstacle is of course the financial one, as the cost of materials and labour have increased nearly 300% since 1939.

### Housing Repairs (contd.).

The Surveyor reports that the following action has been taken with respect to housing defects during the year:-

Number of houses inspected under Public Health Acts or Housing Acts.	50
Number of inspections made.	137
Number of defects remedied by informal notice.	46
Number of defects remedied after formal notice.	1

Generally speaking the repairs carried out have been such as to render houses reasonably fit to live in, e.g. defective roofs, etc.

A number of cases of over-crowding were relieved but there are still many families over-crowded and the total can only be ascertained by a complete survey of all the houses in the Borough.

### SITES OF NEW HOUSES.

<u>Site</u>	<u>Houses completed in 1952</u>	<u>Houses under construction as at 31.12.52.</u>	<u>Houses to be commenced in 1953.</u>
Woodberry Close	17	-	-
Sydney Cottage Estate	4 (flats)	-	-
Grove Estate	20	20	56
Ludlow Road	2 (private)	6 (private)	-
Conduit Lane	2 "	-	-
Love Lane	5 "	2 "	4 (private)
Goodwood Avenue	-	3 "	-
Victoria Road	-	3 "	1 "
Dancsford	-	1 "	-
Innage Lane	-	-	1 "
Salop Street	-	-	1 "
Hookfield	-	-	1 "
Other Sites	-	-	3 "
Totals	50	35	67



## Unfit Houses.

In the year 1930 a Housing Act dealt with the problem of Slum Clearance and the re-housing of persons from such condemned houses. This was followed by the 1935 Housing Act which was concerned to a large extent with the re-housing of families living in over-crowded conditions. Under both these Acts considerable progress was made with the two problems with which they dealt but we still have the same two problems to face and added to them is a third, namely an acute shortage of houses of every type.

The almost total cessation of building during the war has of course accentuated these matters but there are signs that building is getting under way again although the demand for new houses does not lessen.

No complete Survey of all houses in the Borough has yet been made but the Surveyor has supplied the following estimates of the number of houses in the different categories:-

Total number of houses	1,989
Approximate number FIT	1,659
" number requiring RECONDITIONING	54
" " " DEMOLITION	276
Number required for replacement	350

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At present there are a number of houses in the town for which the owners have given an undertaking not to re-let. Under Section 11 of the Housing Act, 1936, the Council can accept such an undertaking in certain cases. For example, if the house is one of a row of houses, the other being occupied, it might be difficult to demolish it without endangering the houses on either side. The obvious course would be to deal with all the houses in the row, but at the present time it might not be considered right to demolish a number of houses which can be tenanted for a few more years.

A proportion of the new houses built should be let to tenants of houses which are unfit and not capable of being made fit. At the same time steps should be taken to prevent such houses from being re-let to new tenants by the necessary action under the Housing Act, 1936. If this is not done then no progress in getting rid of the old, unfit houses, can be made, and the Council will probably soon be asked to re-house the new tenant.

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## SECTION E.

### INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

#### MEAT.

The meat supplied to the Borough comes from the Ministry of Food's abattoir at Wolverhampton where the inspection of the meat is carried out. The Ministry have now indicated that when meat is no longer rationed it is not their intention to retain the present control over slaughter-houses but that these will be handed back to local authorities or private owners. It is intended, however, to have a limited number of these places only - perhaps 300 or 400 for the whole of England. At present the Ministry are building a number of abattoirs in different places and no doubt from these a standard type will develop which will serve as a model for the future buildings. Before the war there were about 12,000 slaughter-houses in the country and many of them were not suitable. In addition, it was impossible to have adequate inspection carried out in so many places. It is best to have larger abattoirs with a Meat Inspector present all the time animals are being slaughtered. During the year no cases of food poisoning were reported in which food concerned was suspected to be meat.

#### MILK.

There are ten retailers on the Register and of these four sell T.T. milk, and the remainder Pasteurised Milk. The milk producers number sixteen but the supervision of their premises is the duty of the Ministry of Agriculture's officers.

Eight samples of milk were taken during the year and all were satisfactory. It would be better if samples were taken from all the retailers' milk supplies as the knowledge that samples are being taken helps to ensure a higher standard of cleanliness in the supplies. Two of the retailers sell small quantities of undesignated milk.

The Inspector reports that there are three dairies in the town, other than dairy farms, and that they are reasonably satisfactory but not fit in all respects.

The Wolverhampton Co-operative Society hold a supplementary licence to sell T.T., Pasteurised and Sterilized milk in the town.

#### ICE CREAM.

There are 41 premises registered for the sale of ice cream in the Borough. In every case but one the ice cream sold is pre-packed and is the product of one of the larger manufacturers. In one case the ice cream is made by what is known as the 'cold mix' method, i.e. a powder is added to water only and the mixture is then frozen. A total of 15 samples were reported on and were graded as follows:-

Grade 1.	12 samples
" 2.	2 "
" 3.	- "
" 4.	1 "



It will be seen that 93% of the samples fell into Grades 1 & 2. The Ministry recommend that 80% of samples should fall into these two Grades. Ice cream is a food which may easily spread disease if its preparation is not carefully supervised.

### FOOD CONDEMNED.

During the year a considerable amount of tinned and other foods was condemned as unfit for human food and destroyed. The Inspector reports that the following foods were destroyed:-

Sheep carcasses	18	Canned Meat	34 tins
Calf carcasses	1	" Ham	6 "
Sausage	47 lbs.	" Fish	21 "
Bacon	61 "	" Fruit	214 "
Veal	5 "	" Milk	17 "
Mutton	29 "	" Vegetables	72 "
Pork	50 "	" Other foods	52 "
Poultry	27 fowls.	Pies	15 lbs.
Fish	56 lbs.	Cheese	16 "

### SCHOOL CANTEENS.

The supervision of the Staff and the premises in school canteens and kitchens is in the hands of the School Medical Department of the County Council. An effort is made to examine the personnel in these establishments at least once each year and new entrants are examined as soon as possible after appointment. A record card for each worker is kept at the County Health Office.

No cases of food infection were notified during the year from any source.

### SECTION F.

#### PREVALENCE OF AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS DISEASES

The following cases of Infectious Disease were notified during the year:-

<u>Disease</u>	<u>Cases notified</u>	<u>No. of deaths</u>
Measles	115	-
Whooping Cough	5	-
Pneumonia	4	4
Meningo-coccal infection	2	-

During the first three quarters of the year there were only nine notifications received but in the month of December Measles became prevalent among the children.

It will be seen that the town was remarkably free from the more serious infectious diseases during 1952, but it is still very necessary to keep a close look out for such diseases so that the first case or cases may be isolated and an epidemic prevented.

Travel by air has made it possible for persons who are incubating diseases such as Small Pox, Typhoid Fever, etc. to reach this country from abroad before they develop signs of these diseases and in this way to spread disease before their illness is definitely diagnosed. This calls for special precautions to be taken in the case of all passengers coming to this country by air from abroad.

Immunisation of children against Diphtheria has again been carried out at Schools, Welfare Centres or at the childrens' homes. Particulars of the numbers immunised will be found in the County Health Officer's Report.

No case of Food Poisoning was notified during the year.

### T U B E R C U L O S I S.

The number of cases on the Register at the end of the year was as follows:-

<u>Pulmonary</u>		<u>Non-pulmonary</u>		<u>Total</u>
Males	Females	Males	Females	
16	13	15	30	74

#### New Cases.

Four male and one female pulmonary cases were notified, and three male and two female non-pulmonary cases. In 1951 there were nine new pulmonary cases and no non-pulmonary ones.

#### Deaths.

Three deaths were registered from the disease, the ages at death being 35, 49 and 78, and all were males. Death-rate = 0.496 per 1,000 of the population.

### C A N C E R.

A total of 14 deaths were due to Cancer, this number being five less than in 1951. The death-rate was 2.315 per 1,000, which is lower than last year but higher than the rate for the country as a whole. Two of the deaths were due to Cancer of the lung in men. In 1952 the number of deaths from Cancer of the lung exceeded the number of deaths from Pulmonary Tuberculosis, that is in the whole country.

## CAUSES OF DEATH.

The following were the principal causes of death in 1952:-

<u>Cause</u>	<u>Number of Deaths</u>		
	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
Dis. of Heart & Circul.	16	24	40
Cancer (all sites)	8	6	14
Vasc. Dis. of Nervous System.	2	9	11
Bronchitis	-	5	5
Pneumonia	3	1	4
Tuberculosis (Pulm)	3	-	3
Accidents	1	2	3
All other causes	8	13	21
Totals	41	60	101

It will be noticed that the chief diseases causing death are those which affect the older age groups.

Deaths from Infectious Diseases which formerly killed many children have now almost completely disappeared.

Deaths from Tuberculosis have also greatly diminished in number.

Pneumonia has now ceased to be so commonly a fatal disease as it was formerly among elderly people.

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